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ABSTRACT

School safety patrols are a school management team member and provide citizenship training. Pupils, through participation, can learn responsibility and leadership and develop their character. Patrol work is relevant and necessary, and the children are enthusiastic participants. Moreover, patrol work stresses individual needs and human relations. Patrols need everyone's support. There is a job to be done in the safety patrol work throughout America that is vital--vital as life itself. The school safety patrol has a definite place in today's educational system. (NH)

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DO SCHOOL SAFETY PATROLS FIT INTO TODAY'S EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM?

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WHAT'S A CHILD'S LIFE WORTH?

Dr. Allen H. Wetter, a recent superintendent of Philadelphia schools, once said,"Our schools will never teach anything more important than the preservation of life itself." A very significant statement by the superintendent of a very large city. Then on another occasion he has said this, "What's a child's life worth? A hundred dollars? A thousand dollars? A million dollars?" And then he hesitated. He colored and said, "I know that if it were my child or grandchild no amount of money could ever take its place." Certainly these statements attested to one superintendent's feelings of whether or not school safety patrols fit into today's educational program.

Shakespeare's Henry IV had this quote: "Out of the nettle danger we pluck the flower of Safety." I submit that the safety patrol is one of the most beautiful flowers in the safety field. It is of time and effort too. The rewards are great not only for the children, but parents as well.

Now as to the educational values of the safety patrol, let me just say a few things, I think you'll get my point.

PATROLS PROVIDE CITIZENSHIP TRAINING

From the earliest stages of cooperative planning for school patrols through the several steps of organizing them and all the time the patrols are in operation, they provide an outstanding opportunity for citizenship education. Two of the major purposes of school patrols are to give pupils practice in cooperative planning and to implement classroom instruction in safety with meaningful activities in which the students have a large measure of self-direction.

In carrying out their various patrol activities, pupils learn about the community; how to make use of its resources, and so forth. School patrols are democratically planned and operated to represent learning by doing at its best. By their very nature, school patrols provide a protective influence for the entire student body. Through their regular presence at designated places, through their personal example, and through the carrying out of their duties, patrol members serve continually to remind all pupils of sound practices which otherwise might easily be left to chance.

PATROLS ARE A SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAM MEMBER

But the protection they provide is a concomitant value—it goes along with, rather than is, the sole reason for having patrols. A patrol can be fully justified on the educational values alone. At many points in a typical school program, situations exist regularly that require

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management controls which the teachers alone cannot provide. An effective school patrol program is a logical answer to the handling of these occurring situations.

Patrols not only help to achieve the orderly administration of school routine but create the means for solving difficult problems to the benefit of everyone concerned. In addition to their basic educational value, school patrols provide protection against injuries, save lives, save time in mass movement of the student body and conserve pupil and teacher energies for other worthwhile activities. Yes, the school safety patrol fits into today's educational system.

PUPILS LEARN THROUGH PARTICIPATION

What are my feelings as a school administrator regarding the educational role of the school patrol? Well, I think they provide the finest type of student participation available in elementary schools today. Participation is basic to general education, to safety education and to patrol work in particular. They provide tremendous administrative help in running a good, safe school, and it's been more than 20 years ago that I was a principal of a Philadelphia public school and I can attest to their value. They give great service and responsibility opportunities for youngsters and their schools. They offer fine leadership development for young people; they give excellent citizenship education and, I'd like to add one other thing: character education—something very much needed in the world today. They bring about helpful community involvement for the youngsters and their schools. Yes, the safety patrol fits into today's educational activity.

EDUCATIONAL ROLE OF TODAY'S SAFETY PATROLS

Do safety patrols fit into the educational picture in terms of educational emphases and jargon, if you will, today? Let's look at some of the things.

Patrol Work is Needed

In terms of need, there is a greater need for a safety patrol today than ever. A great deal of the emphasis on individualized instruction today has been part and parcel, really, of the safety patrol movement.

Patrol Work is Relevant

Is the safety patrol work relevant? Educators talk today about relevancy in connection with today's life style? I think that, well, when we think of the speed of the vehicles, when we think of the complica-

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tions out on our streets, where safety is so important, we see how important the patrols are today.

Patrol Work Turns Kids On

We talk in education today about turning the kids on. But we used to call it motivation. We motivated the kids; we had them participate. Today that's not it at all, you have to turn them on. Well I can't think of anything that turns kids on more than the safety patrol. Kids give their right arm, left arm, perhaps a foot or two also just to get on the safety patrol. It does turn them on! They want to do it in most cases.

Patrol Work Emphasizes Team Teaching

As for team teaching which we hear so much about in education today, school patrol members have been team members for a long, long time. They are a real teaching service in traffic safety to other boys and girls.

Patrols Work in Instructional Pods

We hear about large classroom spaces and instructional pods; the safety patrol has been on wide city spaces and instructional pods at street intersections for many years.

Patrol Work Stresses Individual Needs and Human Relations

Ungraded instruction according to individual needs and situations? The safety patrol has been in the forefront of this type of instruction.

Guts issues? That's another thing we hear in education. It doesn't ring right with me but that's the way they talk. What is more basic than the preservation of life itself is my question to you!

They talk about the human relations. The safety patrol has always been out in the community with the kids and with the parents, and the other adults of the community, working like a hand and glove to achieve a purpose.

Budget problems? Oh, we have these all over the place. Well, the AAA has solved that problem for the school as far as the safety patrols are concerned, with all their badges, materials and all the other service.

And let me say for all the schools if I may, we are grateful. I think we err on the side of the fact that sometimes we do not express our appreciation, but believe me, deep down, what you provide for the schools is a tremendous help.

SAFETY PATROLS CAN NEVER BE "OLD HAT"

Educators and safety department members of AAA Clubs must ever be mindful that each year a new group of youngsters comes in the

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safety patrol. Your plans, operational information, awards, and special events are new today. It's "old hat" to you perhaps, but this activity can never be old hat. It's new to the kids that are out there. Teachers, professional and lay, must be fully aware of this fact and never let their enthusiasm for the program drop off. The teacher who teaches the first grade year after year gets terribly tired of teaching the same thing, but she must always remember that this is a new group of youngsters performing now and it's new to them. And then her enthusiasm comes back. How about yours?

PATROLS ARE A KEY LINK IN SCHOOL SAFETY PROGRAMS

Again I repeat, the school safety patrol has a definite place in today's educational system. Notice that I'm not going into operational procedures, though, I'm just giving you some philosophy and quotes, that's all. School safety patrols may well be considered to be a key link in the school's safety program. They became popular about two generations ago in traffic problems in the vicinity of urban schools. Such patrols gave the first sign of the school's awareness of the traffic hazards of children, which have been increasing year by year. The growth and the successful operation of these patrols in almost all urban areas of the country, saving lives and preventing injuries and traffic accidents, attest to the use of them. School patrols represent perhaps the highest degree of service, leadership, and cooperation of which students are capable in elementary and junior high school—middle school if you will—levels. They play a vital role in the reduction in traffic accidents of children; they help in the school's professional operations.

Most safety patrols act as the chief dramatizers of the safety ideal in the public mind. The public would scarcely be aware of the safety efforts of the school without the patrols out there.

Perhaps no other form of significant safety activity is as important to the principal, the teachers, the students and the community as is the safety patrol. School safety patrol activities should be an integral part of the school's educational program. Properly conceived, they should play a significant role in the lives of pupils in classrooms, schools and communities in the direction and development of the proper attitudes and practices in traffic safety.

School safety patrol activities should lead ultimately to self-control and desirable behavior in traffic. The use of safety patrols in no sense should take the place of the fullest measure of educational effort in the development of inner discipline and self-control among the pupils.

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SAFETY PATROLS ARE TRULY SENTINELS OF SAFETY

The members of the school safety patrol may be well looked upon as sentinels of safety. Point one, their presence on a street corner, if they did nothing else—and of course they do—serves as a warning to any thoughtful motorist that children are present. They represent too the protective arm of the principal, the teachers and the parents and conservation of child life. Most of all, safety patrol members are teachers of safety to other boys and girls by virtue of their example and instruction. Few schools can avoid recognizing the instructional and administrative value of a good safety patrol.

PATROLS NEED EVERYONE'S SUPPORT

Have you thought about your patrol lately, really? For the patrol which you have some control over, have you had installations, ceremonies, special assemblies, local and town and city newspaper coverage, school bulletin boards, displays, training programs for lower grades, classroom cuts for safety patrol members, police officers' talks concerning the present situation, safety box suggestions for all students to contribute to, special events in the safety patrol jamboree, safety appreciation day, baseball games, and all that? Safety patrol leaders' summer camp? We have a summer day camp in Philadelphia each year. The AAA Club is in the forefront there. They even provide personnel services for us.

Do you have demonstrations by police and school crossing guards when they come in to your schools? Do you serve hot chocolate on very cold days? We use a standard of 20 degrees or lower. I have schools serve hot chocolate to the kids after they come in.

BUS PATROLS ARE NEEDED TODAY AS WELL

Do you organize Bus Patrols? There is a greater need for that as you go along. Do you involve the parents, do you have officer training programs, do you have cadet patrols for younger children to develop? Do you have big community relations programs? I wish I could describe some of the details of each of these, but I just don't have the time.

I could take hours to talk to you about patrols. You have to believe in what you are doing. Be competitive with every other thing that the school and children do. What's the definition of a competitor? Somebody once defined competitor as one who goes through a revolving door in back of you but comes out ahead, which means that you really have to work on your program and make it meaningful in the school.

A safety patrol learns many things in addition to the ideal of safety

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and accident prevention. Patrol work is excellent citizenship training, as I said before, teaching self-reliance and responsibility and the protection of others. And I repeat, it has proved as valuable in the development of good character and citizenship as it has proved effective in saving lives. Yes, the school safety patrol does fit into today's educational system.

PATROLS ARE CHILDREN IN RESPONSIBLE ACTION

I would like to quote from Clare Tree Major: "Would you set your name among stars and write it large upon the hearts of little children? They will remember. Have you dreamed of a newer and happier world? Tell the children. They will build it for you. Have you a word for poor, blind, stumbling humankind? Then give it not to stupid, blundering men; give it to the children. In their clear, untroubled minds it will reflect itself a thousandfold and someday place itself upon a mountain top."

Mrs. Ruth Sayre, who is a member of the President's Committee on Traffic Safety, concluded a three day conference—The President's Conference in Atlantic City—by telling a story which I should like to repeat. A little Italian village had been bombed during the war, and a statue of Christ had been destroyed. The people of the little village gathered together and tried to put the statue back together again. When they looked in the muddle, they found all of the pieces except the hands of Christ, and they were quite concerned because the statue was not complete. So, Henry the Priest said to them, "We do not need the hands, after all he has hands. There are only your hands to do the work in the world."

PATROLS REFLECT "I CAN" PHILOSOPHY

And so, in conclusion, let me say this. We have a job to do in the safety patrol work throughout America that is vital—vital as life itself. We know you can and will continue to do the job that you are presently doing. If it seems difficult, perhaps you would like to remember a bulletin board that I observed at Dobbins Technical High School. The caption said: "It's Great To Be An American." And then below it said: "Remember That The Last Four Letters Of The Word American Spell I CAN." And I know you can. Continue with your safety patrol work and improve as you go along. And so I say to you "hats off" to the past, you've done a very fine job, but "coats off" to the future.

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This speech was presented at the AAA School Safety Patrol Workshop at Williamsburg, Virginia in July 1971.

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